

Cooperative Connections



Electricity in the classroom

Page 8-9

People behind the power

Pages 12-13

Jennifer Gross has educated thousands of students about electricity through the Cooperatives in the Classroom program.

Cooperative Principles



Ken Schlingen

General Manager

\$650,000 revenue refund aligns with cooperative principles

The New Year has arrived, and you should have seen a credit on your most recent electric bill. The credit reflects your share of the \$650,000 revenue refund authorized by your board. This was possible due to the higher than expected margins in 2020. Your cooperative had a surprisingly good year, but we realize many of our members experienced hardship. This is our way of giving back to our members. Thank you for your patronage and for your continued support.

The New Year also welcomes vaccine options, which should mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 virus. While the vaccines are being administered, your cooperative will continue to take appropriate precautions to protect our employees and our membership.

January is typically when your cooperative hosts informational meetings in each of the eight counties we serve. These meetings have been moved to the April timeframe in the hopes that our concerns with COVID-19 might be reduced. We call them District Meetings because they are held within each director district or county. This is where you can elect someone to represent you on Central Electric's board of directors.

As I mentioned, the District Meetings are planned for April 2021. We will host a meeting in all eight counties, but only Davison and Hanson Counties will have an election this year. An at-large director is chosen at the annual meeting in September. Specific dates and locations will be coming soon.

Board members are a vital part of the cooperative business model, and much is expected of them to fulfill their duties. Directors serve you and provide a member's perspective to help guide cooperative decisions. Their perspective also helps set policies that are in the best interest of the members and the cooperative as a whole.

Directors are required to attend the regular monthly meetings, but there is much more to their role. They must also attend their local district meeting and represent your cooperative at meetings held by industry partners throughout the year. Central Electric requires each director to become a Certified Cooperative Director by attending annual training specific to our industry. The training helps board members understand the cooperative's financial statements, operations, electric rates, power requirements and legal issues. This is Cooperative Principle #5 – Education, Training and Information.

Central Electric is part of a network made up of multiple cooperatives working together to meet big challenges. For example, Central Electric joined 24 neighboring cooperatives to form East River Electric Power Cooperative many years ago. Working together we were able to build and control our power delivery system across all of eastern South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota.

Board member Duane Wolbrink from rural Stickney represents our cooperative on the East River board of directors. Through Duane's representation on the East River board, we have a voice in determining the direction of our power supply and wholesale power rates. We do not answer to outside investors and our members are always our priority. This is Cooperative Principle #6 – Cooperation among Cooperatives.

East River and Central Electric are forecasting another year with no change in electric rates. Our cooperative network is cost-based, which means when the cooperative has excess funds they are returned to our members, like the refund you recently received.

Cooperatives serve their members effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together and adhering to the cooperative principles. Having a voice in how your cooperative power supply operates and knowing you are a priority is the value of your cooperative network.

Until next month, stay safe!





A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

- Duane Wolbrink - President
- Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President
- Bernetta Burghardt - Secretary
- Mark Reindl - Treasurer
- Mark Hofer - NRECA
- Donita Loudner - SDREA
- Roger Campbell
- Darwin "Butch" Morrison
- Jim Headley

General Manager: Ken Schlimgen

Editor: Tara Miller

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Central Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at www.centralelec.coop.

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Office open by appointment

Office Information

M-F 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 800-477-2892 or
 605-996-7516
www.centralelec.coop



Mission Statement

Provide Reliable Energy & Services with a Commitment to Safety and Member Satisfaction

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Summary

The board of directors met on Nov. 16, 2020, both virtually and at the Betts Road Service Center for the regular board meeting.

The board approved the October meeting minutes and the October safety meeting minutes. The board then reviewed monthly reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and the financials.

Board Report

Manager Schlimgen updated the board on the following:

- East River Manager's meeting summary.
- Basin Electric report and Annual Meeting summary.
- Invited interested directors to participate in online winter school training.
- Potential economic development opportunities.
- Electric vehicles.
- Capital credit retirement from Basin Electric.
- Recent election results and their impact on our cooperative.
- VW Settlement funds.
- New Chamberlain substation.
- Dakota Energy and East River dispute.

Director Hofer gave a report on the NRECA board meeting.

Director Wolbrink gave an update on the East River Electric Cooperative Board Meeting, including their approval of the 2021 budget.

Board Action

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

Approved the 2021 Work Plan and Budget.

Approved to defer revenue to 2021 and decide on the amount of a power cost refund at next meeting.

Approved a board resolution to support an amendment of the NRECA 401K pension plan.

Approved market rate policy 871.

Approved a service agreement with a commercial member.

Approved engaging Eide Bailly as the auditor for 2020 financials.

Approved a wheeling agreement.

Tabled the board self-assessment until a face-to-face meeting.

Moved to go into executive session for the General Manager performance review.

The next board of directors meeting will be held December 21, 2020.

Please contact the cooperative office for more information regarding the board meeting.

Financial Report	November 2020	Year-to-Date 2020
kWh Sales	29,513,870 kWhs	299,648,930 kWhs
Electric Revenues	\$2,859,563	\$29,967,054
Total Cost of Service	\$2,620,818	\$28,174,685
Operating Margins	\$238,745	\$1,792,369

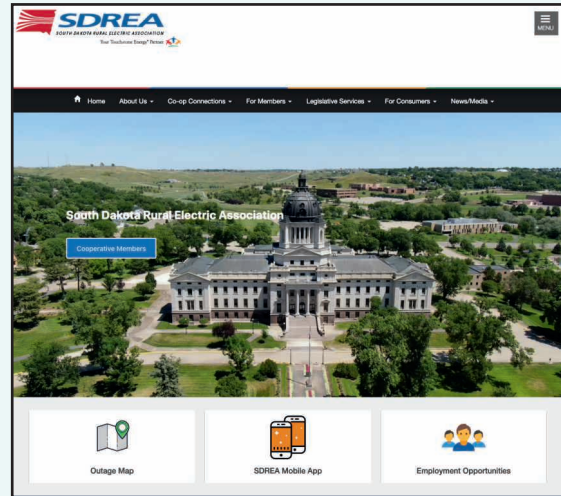
Lighten Your Laundry Load

Laundry isn't a task that many people relish, but if the process can be tweaked to save money, conserve electricity and prolong the life of your clothes, some minor adjustments may be worth your time. Here are some suggestions from Consumer Reports.

- Opt for cold water. Hot water is only needed for laundering oily stains, cloth diapers and sheets and towels used by a family member who has been sick.
- Use high-efficiency detergent for front-loaders, high-efficiency top-loaders and where otherwise recommended by the machine's manufacturer. Conventional detergents create more suds, which can cause the washer to repeatedly rinse laundry, wasting water and time.
- Increase the spin speed to extract more water from your laundry, reducing dryer time. Shake clothes out before transferring them from the washer to the dryer to avoid wrinkles.
- Clean the dryer's lint screen before every load. This improves air circulation and prevents fires. Dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, so if you use them, scrub the filter with a brush monthly.
- Clean the dryer duct regularly to increase airflow, which dries your clothes faster and prevents fires.
- Clean the dryer's moisture sensors. Dryer sheets can leave residue on the sensors that affects their ability to gauge how dry laundry is. Check the owner's manual for instructions on how to clean them.
- Dry similar items together. Don't mix heavy cottons with lightweight fabrics. Wash and dry towels and sheets separately, for example.
- Use the automatic cycle instead of timed drying. If the moisture sensors are working properly, the automatic cycle avoids over-drying, which shortens the life span of clothes and can shrink them.
- And for the least expensive, most efficient method, dry your laundry on a clothesline or use a drying rack indoors. This approach takes a bit more time but is gentler on your clothing, keeping it nicer looking for longer - a savings in itself.

Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at www.sdrea.coop. You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"The Electric Fence is Unsafe!"

Gabbie Eichmann, 11 years old

Gabbie is a resident of rural Canistota. She is the child of Jeremy and Melanie Eichmann, members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

Recipes to Power Up Your Day

Bacon and Egg Lasagna

12 uncooked lasagna noodles	or crumbled
1/3 c. bacon drippings (or oil)	1 lb. bacon/turkey bacon/sausage, cut up
1/3 flour	1 c. chopped onions
1/4 t. pepper	1/2 t. salt
2 c. Swiss cheese	4 c. milk
2 T. parsley	1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
12 eggs, hard cooked, sliced	

Cook lasagna noodles per directions on package. In large skillet cook bacon until crisp (or cook other meat of choice). Reserve 1/3 c. bacon drippings (or use oil) and cook the onion until tender. Add the flour, salt and pepper. Stir until smooth and bubbly. Gradually add the milk, cook until mixture boils and thickens. Stir continuously. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x13 pan. Spoon a small amount of the sauce onto the bottom of the pan. Layer the noodles, sauce, cheese and bacon (or other meat). Pour the remainder of the sauce over the last layer and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

Kristine Shaffer, Lennox, SD

Apple Cranberry Muffins

1-3/4 c. brown sugar	1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 c. vegetable oil	2 eggs
2 c. flour	1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. baking soda	2 c. thinly sliced apples
1 tsp. cinnamon	1/2 lb. cranberries, halved
1 tsp. nutmeg	1/2 c. nuts, chopped

Cream oil and sugar; add eggs and vanilla and beat well. Sift flour, baking soda and salt together and add to mixture. Add spices next. Stir in apples, nuts and cranberries. For Streusel: 1/2 c. flour; 1/3 c. brown sugar; 3 tbsp. butter. Cut butter into flour and sugar until crumbly. Pour into muffin tins and sprinkle with Streusel. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

Ruth E. Schilberg, Viborg, SD

Breakfast Bread Pudding

Butter	1/2 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup creamy peanut butter, divided	4 cups cubed brioche or challah bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
2 eggs	2/3 cup pure maple syrup
1/2 cup granulated sugar	1/3 cup crushed peanuts
2/3 cup milk	Powdered sugar, for garnish
1-1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract	

Heat oven to 350 F. Butter four 4-ounce ramekins. In bowl, mix 1/3 cup peanut butter, eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla and salt. Toss bread cubes in mixture until thoroughly coated. Divide evenly among prepared dishes. Bake until custard is set in middle and tops are golden, about 35-40 minutes. If tops of bread brown too quickly, cover ramekins loosely with aluminum foil. In small saucepan over low heat, combine remaining peanut butter and maple syrup until thoroughly warmed. To serve, drizzle ramekins with maple-peanut sauce and garnish with chopped peanuts and powdered sugar. Substitution: Whole wheat rolls may be used in place of brioche or challah bread.

culinary.net

Baked Eggs

Line muffin pans with 2 wafer thin slices of chicken, beef or pork. Break an egg into each cup. Add a 3/4 tsp. half-and-half and a bit of butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400 degrees for about 15 minutes, or until eggs are cooked to desired firmness.

Elaine Rowitt, Sturgis, SD

Please send your favorite seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

District Meetings Moved to April

Historically, Central Electric has hosted district meetings in January for all counties we serve. The meetings have been pushed to April in an attempt to mitigate concerns regarding COVID-19.

Throughout April we will host a meeting in each of the eight counties in our service territory. Davison and Hanson Counties will have a director election this year. An at-large director will be chosen at the annual meeting in September. Specific dates and locations will be available soon.

Board members are a vital part of the cooperative business model, and much is expected of them to fulfill their duties. Directors serve our members and provide an invaluable perspective that helps guide business decisions and establish policies that are in the best interest of the cooperative as a whole.

If you are interested in serving on the board of directors, the next newsletter will have additional details on how to file a petition. Thanks to our members for your continued support!

Central Electric is a member-owned electric cooperative serving more than 4,500 members in Davison, Hanson, Miner, Sanborn, Jerauld, Buffalo, Brule and Aurora Counties in South Dakota. Central Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Operation Round-Up® Supports Jerauld County 4-H Leadership Project

Jerauld County 4-H members Taylor Braun and Abby Kolousek were awarded \$1,500 in Operation Round-Up® funds to support a landscaping project that improved the area around the courthouse's digital sign. Operation Round-Up® is a voluntary program in which participating Central Electric Cooperative members round up their bill to the next whole dollar, and the extra cents flow into a charitable fund to assist local causes.

The landscaping project was part of a new 4-H program launched in 2020 called the 4-H Teen Leadership Academy. Through the program, teens from Jerauld, Aurora and Sanborn Counties meet monthly to learn about workforce preparedness, communications, government, public relations and, of course, 4-H.

As part of the program, each teen is required to give a speech and plan a project or event for the greater good. "When youth were contemplating direction, they were asked to consider need in their communities, and I basically told them the sky is the limit. If you can dream it, we can do it," said Audra Scheel, South Dakota State University (SDSU) Extension 4-H Youth Advisor.

Kolousek explained that she wanted to do something to help the community. "We decided on installing bricks and plants around the electric sign to make it more visually appealing," she said.

The team submitted a grant proposal to Operation Round-Up® through Central Electric for their project. "Our first grant written was denied earlier this fall, so it was so exciting to see we were accepted for this one," said Taylor Braun. "We could not have done our project without that money."

The group is looking forward to adding plants to the new bed surrounding the digital sign found on the lawn of the courthouse. "Our project has taken a lot of thinking, time and effort, especially when planning, scheduling, and picking out supplies. It is all becoming worth it," Kolousek said.

This project was also funded by a grant from Agtegra in partnership with Land O'Lakes and the Jerauld-Buffalo County 4-H Leaders Association. The 4-H Teen Leadership Academy 2021 selection process is underway. For more information, please contact SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Advisor Audra Scheel at audra.scheel@sdstate.edu.

To learn more about Operation Round-Up®, contact the Central Electric office at 605-996-7516. The next deadline for applications is May 1.



Jerauld County 4-H members Taylor Braun and Abby Kolousek stand in front of their landscaping project at the courthouse in Wessington Springs.

Employee Years of Service



Brandon Auch

Appliance Repair Technician & Journeyman Electrician
Feb. 4 – 2 years



Cody Riggs

Journeyman Lineman
Feb. 15 – 6 years

Welcome Tara Miller



In December, Tara Miller of rural Salem began working at Central Electric Cooperative as our manager of communications.

Miller has 12 years of experience in communications, sales and marketing. She previously worked as a legislative reporter and led communications initiatives for South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems.

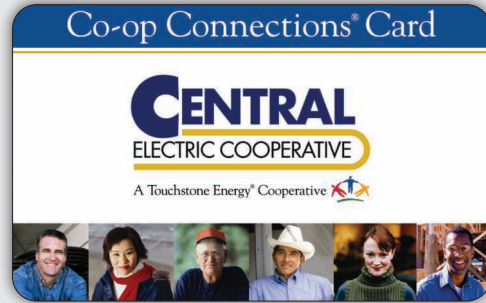
Miller's commitment to cooperatives runs in the family, as she is married to Travis Miller who is a power line foreman at our neighboring cooperative, Southeastern Electric. She also has a number of family members involved in the power industry.

Welcome to the team, Tara!

Youth Tour 2021 Canceled

Due to COVID-19 and its impact on travel and accommodations, South Dakota will not be participating in the 2021 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. We value this opportunity for our students, and the decision was not made lightly. For any questions or concerns, contact our office.

Local Discounts with your Co-op Connections® Card



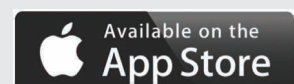
Your cooperative membership earns you discounts at local participating businesses.

Simply show your Co-op Connections Discount Card and save.

- 1) **Ken's Service, Gann Valley, SD;**
10% off tire repair services.
- 2) **M & H, Mitchell, SD;**
\$.05 discount/gallon of gas.
- 3) **Merchandise Outlet, Mitchell, SD;**
10% off pair of boots. (Some exclusions apply. Not valid with other discounts.)
- 4) **Miedema Sanitation, Inc., Mitchell, SD;**
10% off rolloff construction boxes.
- 5) **Mitchell Econolodge Motel, Mitchell, SD;**
10% discount.
- 6) **Mueller Lumber Company, Mitchell, SD;**
15% off regular priced hardware store merchandise and lumber; excludes power tools.
- 7) **New Leaf Body Spa, Mitchell, SD;**
\$5 off a 60 minute massage.
- 8) **On Sight 24/7, Mitchell, SD;**
10% off products and services.
- 9) **Photography Unlimited, Mitchell, SD;**
Free session and 10% off your order.

For a full list of ways to save with your card, please visit www.connections.coop.

To request a card or become a participating business, visit www.centralelec.coop or call 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.





Jennifer Gross teaches the fundamentals of electricity to students at Warner Elementary. Photo by Ben Dunsmoor.

ENLIGHTENING STUDENTS

Teachers, Co-ops Take Energy Education to the Classroom

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@srea.coop

Jennifer Gross doesn't know it for a fact, but she has a sneaking suspicion she has saved someone's life. Maybe more than once.

Gross is not a nurse, or a doctor, or a firefighter or an emergency medical technician. She serves as the education and outreach coordinator at Madison-based East River Electric and oversees the organization's Co-ops in the Classroom program. In that role over the past five years, Gross has instructed thousands of students on the importance of electric safety.

She goes into the classroom and covers a wide range of concepts in less than an hour, including how electricity is generated, how it can be conserved and how potentially dangerous it can be. She's been accused of speaking at the speed of light because there's so much for the students to grasp.

"Our follow-up evaluations sometimes show that I talk too quickly," Gross said with a chuckle. "But there's a lot to cover, so many things they need to know that could keep them safe and free from harm. These are things they're going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It's a lot to pack into an hour, but it's important information."

Gross is one of many cooperative employees across the state who teach students the importance of understanding the benefits and potential dangers of electricity and how to use it wisely. In fact, member and community education is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide South Dakota's electric cooperatives.

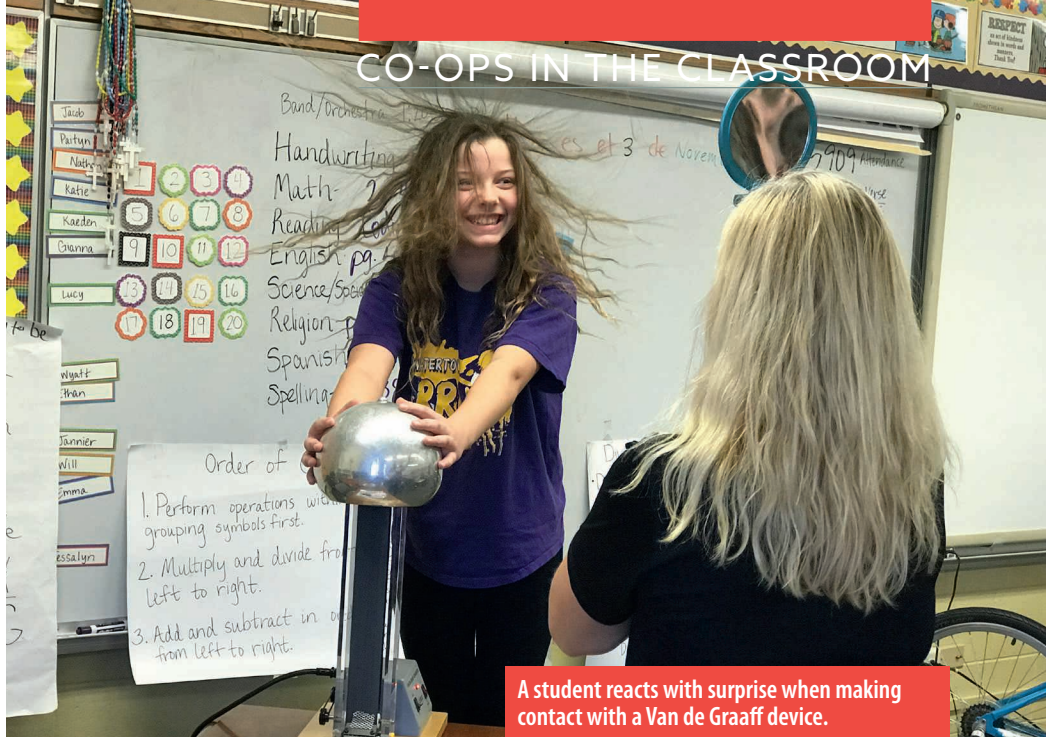
The classroom program that Gross delivers includes how electrical power is generated, how it's transmitted, how it's conserved and how use it safely. The program also includes information that distinguishes electric cooperatives from investor-owned and municipal electric utilities. And one of those differences is a commitment to education and youth leadership development.

"We teach them that there are all kinds of cooperative businesses out there – food co-ops, clothing co-ops, housing co-ops, marketing co-ops and others – and we're here to do more than

Students learn incandescent light bulbs cost more to operate compared to LEDs.



“These are things they’re going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It’s a lot to pack into an hour, but it’s important information.”
 - Jennifer Gross



A student reacts with surprise when making contact with a Van de Graaff device.

just provide electrical power. We’re here to deliver this information because we care about the welfare and well-being of our members, and we’re always here for them if they have questions about electricity.”

Gross was a social worker before she joined East River as support staff in the engineering department more than 10 years ago. Since taking over the Co-ops in the Schools program, she has interacted with many primary and secondary educators who also see the need to teach the fundamentals of electricity.

One of those is Jami Heinrich, a fifth-grade teacher at Warner Elementary School where Gross recently delivered her presentation. She has seen how students respond to discussions about electricity and see the direct application to their everyday lives.

“It’s something that’s always around them and they deal with all the time,” Heinrich

said. “It’s good to get them the information they need to make better choices. When Jennifer was talking about insulators, one of my students brought up that his grandparents’ cell phone chargers were worn out and you could see the wires. He said, ‘So, this is a bad idea.’ It brought up a good discussion in the classroom. Safety around electricity is definitely a priority, and teaching children about it will lead them to make safer choices.”

South Dakota’s electric cooperatives extend their education outreach well beyond elementary school classrooms. The cooperatives have invested in an electrical safety demonstration trailer that makes its way around the state not only to instruct linemen but also to attend public events and show the various components of a grid-based power delivery system. During the demonstration, facilitators send an electrical current through a hotdog, grapefruit and tree branch to show how much destruction unhar- nessed and mishandled electricity can do.

To view a video of the safety demonstration trailer, visit youtube.com/watch?v=FBzB1b-BYsH0&t=55s.

Cooperatives have also supported programs such as the Washington D.C. Youth Tour and the Youth Excursion

that teach high school students not only about electricity but also some of the political considerations surrounding the electric utility industry and the history of the country’s rural electric cooperative movement.

Many elementary and secondary school educators throughout the state – including Gross – have attended the annual teacher education seminar sponsored by the Lignite Energy Council, which attracts 130 participants from Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota. The four-day program takes place at Bismarck State College and offers professional development credits for attendees.

The seminar focuses on how lignite is mined and used to produce electricity for homes, farms and businesses. In addition, the seminar covers lignite’s economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the lignite industry. Since 1986, more than 3,400 teachers have attended the seminar.

Roger Lawien, director of member services at Moreau-Grand Electric in Timber Lake, underscores the importance of electric education: “Member education is a vital part of what we do as co-ops. We have a program we call ‘Neon Leon,’ and one day after a safety demonstration a woman came up with her two boys and said, ‘I just wanted to thank you for what you do here. Because of what you taught my boys at last year’s demonstration, my husband is alive.’ That really shows how important it is.”



Science is at the center of learning about how electricity is generated and used.

Load Management Keeps Rates Low for Members



Patrick Soukup

Manager of Member Services/Marketing

The year 2020 might be in our rear view mirror, but many lessons were taught and obstacles were overcome to make us all better at what we do. I am very grateful to the members we serve for their patience during these times.

As you probably noticed on your last billing statement, the Central Electric Cooperative Board of Directors approved a \$650,000 revenue refund for members. The amount of credit applied to each bill was based on the amount of electricity purchased by that member from January through November 2020.

This refund was possible largely due to how our load shape has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is load shape?

Load shape, in general, describes **when** our members used energy and **how much** they need at any given point in time. Demand and energy!

You ask, how did the last year change our load shape? The recommendation to stay at home and shelter was the driving force behind it. I was out of state when our world changed this past March. When I returned home my house had two college students and a middle school student who were now doing e-learning and activities in my house. This included eating 16 hours a day and doing laundry, when they weren't on their computers doing homework or playing video games.

The shift of the load, or the consumption of energy, changed.

The weekdays started looking like weekends. We were not taking early showers and eating a quick breakfast before school or work. Instead, the day started a little slower for those who were now at home. We were also cooking more meals at home and doing our

RE-ENERGIZING EFFICIENCY

More than 70,000 member homes, farms and businesses are already enrolled in the program and are saving money and energy right now. The more members who sign up, the more everyone saves:

- Lower wholesale power costs for your electric cooperative means savings are passed on to you.
- Reduced energy is not only budget-friendly, it's environmentally friendly, too.
- Get special rebates on select new equipment, including electric water heaters.

Total load management savings in our region = \$231,000,000 and growing!

To participate in the load management program, contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative today.



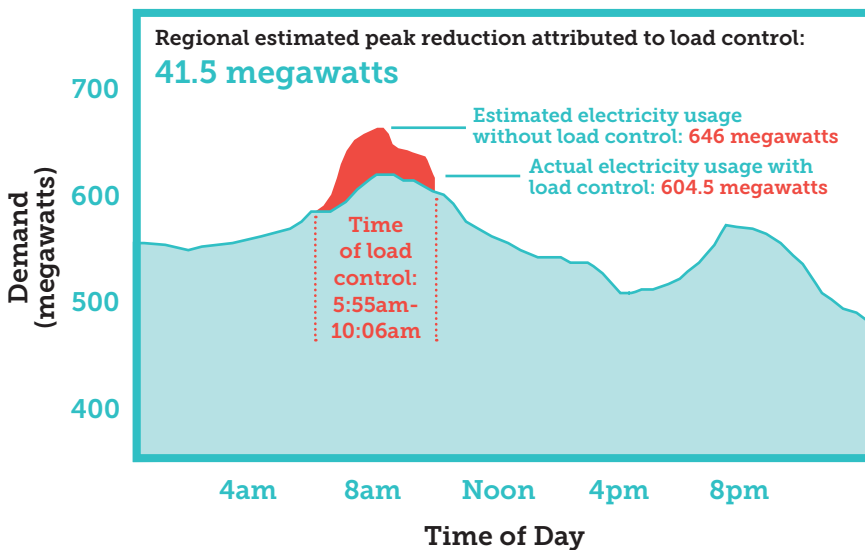
laundry during the week instead of waiting for the weekend. These were some of the driving forces behind the load shape.

How does load management affect load shape?

Load management or *load control* is when selected electric equipment is shut off during peaking conditions on the power system. The specific items I am talking about are water heaters, heat pumps, grain bins, irrigation pivots and large commercial loads. The cooperatives use this option to help keep our rates low and keep your rates low.

In 2020, we saw more load control than we averaged in the last five years due to the shape of the load in our service area. We didn't have the high peaks like past years. The shifting focus to working and learning from home has changed the pattern of energy consumption. The typical daily energy curve flattened because many people stayed in their homes.

Example of daily load control



The chart above indicates the load shape for our region over a 24-hour period in October 2020. The red shaded area shows the energy load we were able to remove off the peak to lower expenses. This efficiency is accomplished through load management.

Additional information

Load management is a volunteer program available to Central Electric Cooperative members. If you have questions about load management or how it may benefit you and the cooperative, please contact our office.

Scholarship deadline Feb. 1

Central Electric Cooperative is offering three (3) scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each, as sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the family of the late Jay Headley.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is awarding one (1) \$1,000 scholarship to a dependent of a member-cooperative member-owner.

To be eligible, a student must be

- 1) a dependent of a member-owner whose primary residence receives electric service from Central Electric Cooperative;
- 2) Enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited post-secondary institution; and
- 3) a U.S. citizen.

Jay Headley Memorial Scholarships

The family of the late Jay Headley of White Lake, SD is awarding two (2) \$1,000 scholarships in honor of his memory.

To be eligible, a student must be

- 1) a dependent of a member-owner whose primary residence receives electric service from Central Electric Cooperative;
- 2) Pursuing a bachelor's of science degree in an agricultural related field; and
- 3) a U.S. citizen.

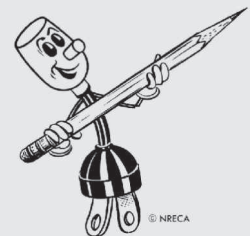
How to Apply

Applications are available at www.centralec.coop or by contacting our office.

Scholarship applications can be emailed to cec@centralec.coop or mailed to:

Central Electric Cooperative
PO Box 850
Mitchell, SD 57301

Applications are due by Feb. 1, 2021.





Antelope Valley Station control room operator J.D. Wolf sits at the control center where he monitors the facility operations.

The People Behind the Power

Power Providers Take Pragmatic Approach to Fuel Use

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

With every change in presidential administrations, there comes a predictable shift in policy positions surrounding coal and the fossil fuels used to generate the electricity that drives the country's economic engine and allows for the conveniences of modern life.

The Obama Administration, for instance, waged what many described as a “war on coal.” It pursued an agenda that focused on imposing stringent regulations designed to push the power generation market toward renewable resources and eliminate fossil fuels. It was an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate an emerging renewable industry.

The next administration followed with President Donald Trump declaring an end to the “war on coal” during his first State of the Union address. President Trump signed executive orders revoking various rules regarding carbon emissions enacted by his predecessor. He vowed to revive the coal mining industry and “put those miners back to work.”

And with yet another change in political

power, President Joe Biden has started the pendulum swinging back in the other direction. His energy approach, which he dubs the “Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice Plan” involves reinstating many of the Obama-era policies including restrictions on oil and gas leases and investing \$400 billion in clean energy technology and innovation over the next 10 years. It also includes pushing the ag sector toward net-zero emissions.

While these policies play out in the political arena, those who bear the responsibility of actually generating the power the country needs have their own perspective. Working diligently and silently in the background of the high-profile political battles pitting climate change activists against climate change deniers are thousands who see these issues as a lot less political and much more practical. Pundits and ideologues suit up each day to argue over policy. Power generators suit up every day to keep the lights on 24/7 at rates people can afford.

For South Dakota's electric cooperative members, that responsibility falls on the staff, management and board members of Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric). Owned by the members it serves, Basin Electric generates electricity

for 140 transmission and distribution co-ops in nine states. The massive power co-op has professionals in place to deal with the political considerations of power production, but most are concerned with keeping the ions flowing toward three million homes, businesses, farms and ranches across the region.

For those individuals, policy decisions have real consequences in terms of how they carry out their work. For example, while some lawmakers roll out plans intended to push the industry in the direction of net-zero emissions, engineers, rate designers, operators, financial experts and others are dealing with the realities of making that happen.

According to Andrew Buntrock, Basin Electric's director of strategic planning, so often it comes down to a delicate balance – a three-legged stool – between on-demand accessibility, zero emissions and low rates. It's practically impossible to achieve all three at optimal levels simultaneously.

“Someone explained it like this: Let's say a rancher wants a vehicle that's affordable, cheap to operate and has zero carbon emissions,” said Buntrock. “But he's not going to be able to pull his loaded cattle trailer with a Prius. He needs the power

of an F-350 to do what he needs to do, to make a living, to bring his product to market and contribute to the economy. Sometimes we want to have it all, but that's not always possible."

He explained that power generators experience constant pressure to curb greenhouse gas emissions and eliminate fossil fuels in favor of renewable power while staying in compliance with governmental and regulatory agencies. To many vocal environmentalists, no realistic timeline to make the country completely energy independent is fast enough.

Basin Electric, Buntrock explained, has long been working to reduce emissions. For instance, in 2000 roughly 85 percent of the cooperative's power was generated with coal as the primary fuel source. Today that percentage is around 44 percent, with nearly \$2 billion spent on environmental emissions control technology. The co-op also has renewable power projects underway including the Wild Springs,



Tom White serves as a mechanic technician at Basin Electric's Deer Creek Station.

from a podium or street protest is often difficult to carry out in the trenches.

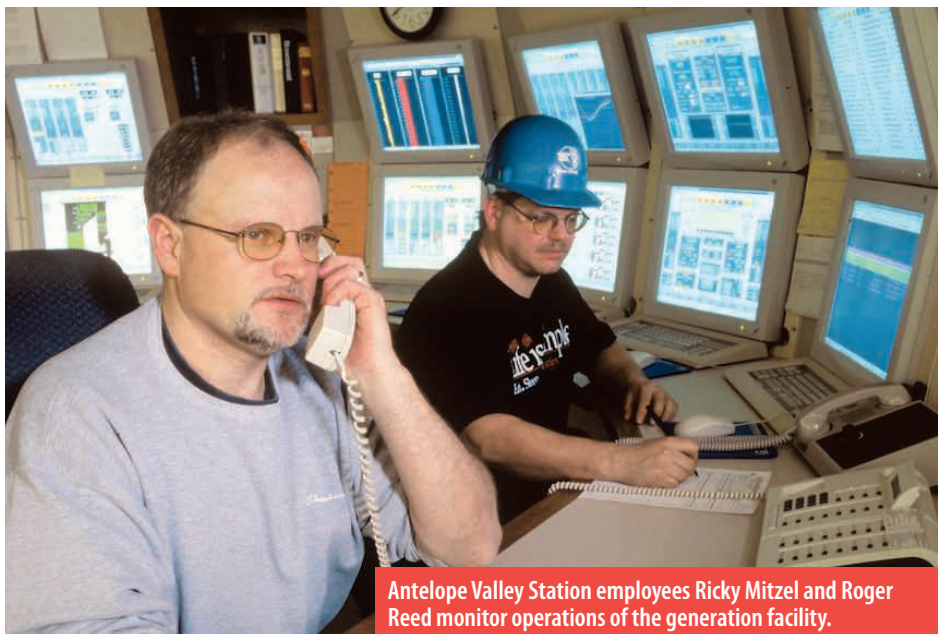
"We've been working on this for 20 years and we've been making strides. We're proud of our efforts to accomplish the thing that we all want: a clean environment. But we also want affordable, accessible power and for now and the foreseeable future, that's going to include

noted that price is even more of a priority since the pandemic struck a blow to the economy.

"Our approach and our strategy is 'all of the above.' We can't put all of our eggs in one basket," Buntrock said. "We're mindful of the concerns expressed by environmentalists because we share those concerns. But we think we're moving in the right direction. We just want our members and the public to understand that a plan or a goal may be easy to formulate, but actually making it happen often entails complex challenges that most people aren't aware of. The story behind the switch isn't one that people hear very often."

Even if fossil fuels could be eliminated altogether and baseload demand could be met entirely with renewable sources, the transition would still leave power producers – and consumers – in a financial lurch.

"It's like having two cars. You have one that you're still paying for. But then you want another model and you can't just dump the first one. You end up having two car notes, but you can only drive one to work," Buntrock said.



Antelope Valley Station employees Ricky Mitzel and Roger Reed monitor operations of the generation facility.

West River and Cabin Creek solar farms and Northern Divide Wind Project. There is also a division dedicated to conducting research on renewable energy sources and applying the most cost-effective implementation.

Buntrock said most power providers welcome and embrace efforts to reduce emissions, but the timetables should be realistic and take into account the fact that formulating a plan that sounds attractive

fossil fuels because it's the best source for being able to control the power production process. You can't always depend on the wind blowing and the sun shining."

Basin recently conducted an extensive survey of its members in an effort to identify their top priorities. The list of responses was led by price, followed by reliability, the two factors necessary for providing power that people can afford and they can access on demand. Buntrock

As the rest of the country watches the Biden Administration and congress negotiate on policy, Buntrock said Basin Electric will continue to produce on-demand power for its members.

"We know we're moving in the right direction and we know our members are confident that we're doing our best to look out for their interests, deliver the power they need and strive to be a good and trusted partner."



Jaclyn Arens of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association in Tabor practices yoga during her vacation breaks.

DE-STRESSING

Shed the Stress of a Busy Life: Take it Easy on Yourself

Billy Gibson

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Take it easy on yourself.

That bit of advice was dispensed by Country Music Hall of Famer Don Williams back in the late 1990s, and it's the same wisdom imparted by Kristie Ching, a certified health and life coach.

Ching, an employee at Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Deer Creek station near Elkton, works with clients who find themselves being overwhelmed by the breakneck speed of modern life and feeling lost and ridden with angst.

What can you do to stay centered while the flurry of activity and information all around you is leaving you exhausted and reducing your quality of life? Ching believes she has the answer. After earning her master's degree in human science in 2014, Ching has helped many clients find the balance they need to regain control of their lives and thrive. But if she had to boil it all down to one pearl of wisdom, she'd say the most important consideration is to make your own success a priority and take it easy on yourself during those times you don't always hit the bullseye.

"You have to give yourself some grace and understand that you don't have to be perfect and it's okay to make a mistake," Ching said.

Maintaining a close mind/body connection is also paramount in being able to cope with the stress and pressures that come to

bear on any given day filled with family and work responsibilities, Ching said. Over the past seven years, she has led classes in PiYo, a blend of pilates and yoga training.

Classes usually include meditation techniques, deep and controlled breathing exercises and vigorous physical movements. The idea is to slow down your mind while moving your body. Some prefer to call it "yoga on crack."

In her work, Ching has discovered that the most helpful directive for many clients is to intentionally take an extended hiatus from the news and generally spend less time in front of a phone, computer or television screen. The results can be transformative, she said.

"The biggest 'aha' moments I get with my clients is when they unclutter their lives and just quiet their minds. We take in so much information from hour to hour. In order to absorb it all, you have to push all of that chaos out with the old stuff cluttering your mind," she said. "One client said what brought her the most peace is when she stopped watching the nightly news. It would literally bring her down. Take some time away from the world and feed your soul. Spend some time laughing with friends or reading a book before you go to bed, not watching TV or scrolling through Facebook."

Tips for Dealing with Stress

By Kristie Ching

- Be thankful. Showing gratitude for all you DO have in your life brings more good into your life.
- Move your body. Do the things you enjoy, attend a class at the local gym, go for a walk or run, dance in the kitchen, play with your kids or grandkids, play a game of basketball with friends. The main thing is to find a physical activity you enjoy.
- Unplug. Put down the phone, iPad, computer.
- Meditation or deep breathing. There are a ton of meditation resources on YouTube, or I teach my clients to utilize a 5-5-7 breathing technique that can be done in just 2 minutes. Set your intention of what you want and just breathe. Breathe in for 5 seconds, hold for 5, exhale for 7.
- Get enough sleep. When you are tired you tend to make more poor choices.
- Write it down. When stress is high it's often a good practice to write it down and get all the frustration

down on paper. Then throw it away and release it.

- Slow down and eat with all your senses. We often add stress to our bodies just by scarfing down our food. Slow down. Enjoy the smells and tastes.
- Spend time with people who lift you up and make you laugh. Laughter is the best medicine!
- Make time to do the things you enjoy. Reading, blogging, going for a walk, watching your favorite TV show, draw, color, anything to let your inner child come out.
- Unclutter. I encourage clients to first look at areas they need to unclutter. In order to bring in the new you need to take out the old, just like when you buy a new couch, you get rid of the old one.



One thing that Ching is sure to bring up with her clients is the connection of food, eating, the body and the mind.

She said one highly effective way of losing weight is to unclutter the mind before approaching the dinner table. While many succumb to overeating due to worry and stress, managing the spirit and the mind typically results in fewer bad dietary habits and prolonged body weight control. Less stress leads to fewer calories, and fewer calories leads to weight loss. She calls it food freedom.

“When you achieve food freedom, you don’t have to diet all the time and deal with the stress that comes with always being on a diet.” Ching said. “Stress can

lead to overeating. If you’re under stress, don’t reach for those potato chips or candy bar. Go find a quiet place and relax for a moment and meditate. If you can meditate for a few minutes before you sit down to eat, that can help you relax, and it will also aid in your digestion.”

Jaclyn Arens sometimes experiences stress in her role as marketing and member services coordinator at Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association in Tabor. She was a fixture at the Soul Story Yoga Studio before the local business shut down its facility due to concerns over the pandemic. Arens said the concepts and techniques she has learned can be practiced anywhere. She sometimes pauses during vacation trips to center herself and

prepare herself for a day of outdoors fun.

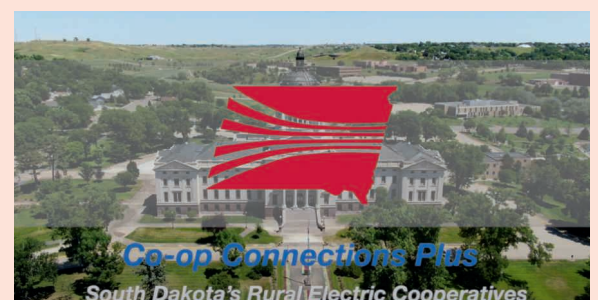
“Yoga is adaptable for any fitness level and can be practiced pretty much anywhere,” she said. “I do yoga to increase my strength, balance, and flexibility, and to take time to think and breathe. One thing I appreciate about yoga is the supportive community, and I look forward to returning to the studio when the pandemic is under control and feeling that sense of community again!”

Soul Story Studio owner Rebecca Johnson said she has no timetable to re-open the studio but has begun offering classes online at www.soulstoryyoga.com/online-classes.

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for “Co-op Connections Plus” and you’ll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to “like” and “subscribe.”



Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.

January 18-25

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD
605-717-9294

January 21-24

Elf The Musical, Area
Community Theatre,
Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

January 23

Treasured Lives Presents:
Bazzel Baz, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
1-800-468-6463

January 29-30

Pro Snocross Races, Days
of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

January 29-February 6

Black Hills Stock Show &
Rodeo, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-335-3861

January 29-31

Winterfest, Lead, SD
605-335-3861

February 5-6

Mardi Gras Weekend,
Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

February 10-13

Watertown Winter Farm
Show, Codington County
Extension Complex,
Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

February 12-13

SD High School State
Gymnastics Meet, Watertown
Civic Arena, Watertown, SD



Pro Snocross Races, Jan. 29-30, 2021

February 18

The Q's High Line to
Deadwood – A 130-year
Retrospective, Homestake
Adams Research and Cultural
Center, Deadwood, SD
605-722-4800

February 18-25

Twelfth Annual Black Hills
Film Festival, Virtual
605-574-9454

February 20-27

SD State High School
Wrestling Tournament,
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

February 25

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood
Live: Neighbor Day,
Washington Pavilion, Sioux
Falls, SD
605-367-6000

March 5-6

SD High School State Debate
& IE Tournament, Central
High School, Aberdeen, SD

March 12-13

St. Patrick's Day Weekend,
Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

March 13

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride
and Tour, Spearfish Canyon
Lodge, Lead, SD
605-641-4963

March 13

St. Patrick's Day Celebration,
Knights of Columbus Hall,
Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun
Show, American Legion Hall,
Philip, SD
605-859-2280

March 19-20

Annual Schmeckfest,
Freeman Academy,
Freeman, SD
605-925-4237

March 23-24

Shen Yun, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center Fine Arts
Theatre, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

March 25

A Lakota View of the Dead
Hills, Homestake Adams
Research and Cultural Center,
Deadwood, SD
605-722-4800

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.